

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all previous versions, and listings, of claims in the Application.

Listing of Claims

Please amend the Claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) Method A method of pre-heating a pot ~~provided with anodes and cathodes~~ for the production of aluminium by electrolysis, ~~said method including a first step, prior to the pot being supplied with current, during which comprising:~~
~~depositing a layer of a granular conductive material between an anode and a cathode of the pot, the granular conductive material being predominately graphite; and is deposited and then crushed~~
~~crushing the granular conductive material between the anode[[s]] and the cathode[[s]], characterized in that the granular conductive material is graphite based and in that~~
~~wherein the layer of granular conductive material only extends, after crushing, over a part of the a lower surface of each the anode and takes the form of contact blocks.~~
2. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein the layer of granular conductive material covers, after crushing, from 5 to 40% of the lower surface of each anode.
3. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 2, wherein the layer of granular conductive material covers, after crushing, from 5 to 20% of the lower surface of each anode.
4. (Currently Amended) Method according to claim 1, wherein ~~the a~~ number of contact blocks associated with ~~each the~~ anode is from 3 to 20.

5. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein the contact blocks have, in cross-section, a general circular or oval shape.
6. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein each contact block has an initial thickness of from 0.5 to 4 cm.
7. (Currently Amended) Method according to claim 1, wherein the contact blocks are made using a template placed on the cathode[[s]] and including a plate fitted with several orifices into each of which granular conductive material is inserted.
8. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein 90 to 95% of the graphite grains of the granular conductive material are from 1 to 8 mm in size.
9. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein the granular conductive material additionally includes at least one other material that is able to vary its resistivity.
10. (Currently Amended) Method of ~~pre-heating a pot~~, according to claim 1, wherein said method comprises further comprising:
forming a layer of the granular conductive material over a part of the surface of [[a]] the cathode,
laying each the anode on the layer of granular material,
establishing an electrical connection between the stem of each the anode and the an anode frame, and
energizing the pot so as to cause an electric current to flow between the cathode[[s]] and the anode[[s]].
11. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 1, wherein two or more contact blocks have a cross-section of different sizes.

12. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 2, wherein the contact blocks have, in cross-section, a general circular or oval shape.
13. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 2, wherein each contact block has an initial thickness of from 0.5 to 4 cm.
14. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 5, wherein each contact block has an initial thickness of from 0.5 to 4 cm.
15. (Currently Amended) Method according to claim 2, wherein the contact blocks are made using a template placed on the cathode[[s]] and including a plate fitted with several orifices into each of which granular conductive material is inserted.
16. (Currently Amended) Method according to claim 5, wherein the contact blocks are made using a template placed on the cathode[[s]] and including a plate fitted with several orifices into each of which granular conductive material is inserted.
17. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 2, wherein 90 to 95% of the graphite grains of the granular conductive material are from 1 to 8 mm in size.
18. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 5, wherein 90 to 95% of the graphite grains of the granular conductive material are from 1 to 8 mm in size.
19. (Previously Presented) Method according to claim 2, wherein the granular conductive material additionally includes at least one other material that is able to vary its resistivity.
20. (Currently Amended) Method of ~~pre-heating a pet~~, according to claim 2, wherein said method comprises further comprising:

forming a layer of the granular conductive material over a part of the surface of
[[a]] the cathode,

laying each the anode on the layer of granular material,

establishing an electrical connection between the stem of each the anode and the
an anode frame, and

energizing the pot so as to cause an electric current to flow between the
cathode[[s]] and the anode[[s]].

21. (New) Method according to claim 1, wherein the layer of granular conductive material is deposited between a plurality of anodes and at least one cathode of the pot, wherein the granular conductive material is crushed between a plurality of anodes and the at least one cathode, and wherein the layer of granular conductive material extends, after crushing, over a part of a lower surface of each anode.

22. (New) A method of pre-heating a pot for the production of aluminium by electrolysis, comprising:

inserting a granular conductive material between an anode and a cathode of the pot, the granular conductive material being predominately graphite;

placing the anode and the cathode into contact with the granular conductive material; and

energizing the pot so as to cause an electric current to flow between the cathode and the anode, through the granular conductive material.

23. (New) Method of claim 22, further comprising:

crushing the granular conductive material between the anode and the cathode,

wherein the layer of granular conductive material extends, after crushing, over a part of a lower surface of the anode and takes the form of contact blocks.

24. (New) Method of claim 23, wherein the contact blocks are made using a template placed on the cathode and including a plate fitted with several orifices into each of which the granular conductive material is inserted.
25. (New) Method according to claim 23, wherein a number of contact blocks associated with the anode is from 3 to 20.
26. (New) Method according to claim 23, wherein two or more contact blocks have a cross-section of different sizes.
27. (New) Method according to claim 22, wherein the granular conductive material is inserted between a plurality of anodes and at least one cathode of the pot, wherein the plurality of anodes and the at least one cathode are placed into contact with the granular conductive material, and wherein the electric current flows, upon energizing, between the plurality of anodes and the at least one cathode.
28. (New) Method according to claim 22, wherein 90 to 95% of the graphite grains of the granular conductive material are from 1 to 8 mm in size.
29. (New) Method according to claim 22, wherein the granular conductive material additionally includes at least one other material that is able to vary its resistivity.